

**Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>24 July 2015</b>
Subject:	<b>Anti Bullying</b>

**Summary:**

This report sets out the support services provided to children and young people, schools and colleges for Anti Bullying across Lincolnshire.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the contents of the report and attached work plan.

## **1. Background**

Bullying is children and young people's primary safety concern, and remains nationally the highest reason for calls to Childline. Anti Bullying is currently identified as a strategic objective in Lincolnshire's Children and Young People's Plan, detailed under the 'Healthy and Safe' strategic outcome.

We know that helping children and young people to feel good about themselves, to enjoy relationships and to promote confidence and self-esteem has a positive impact on their development. We also know that many children and young people are affected by bullying at some time in their childhood. Bullying affects children and young people in different ways, but particular groups of children and young people are more vulnerable than others.

Where incidents of bullying are allowed to become persistent and continuous, the outcomes for those involved can be damaging educationally, physically, socially and emotionally.

### **What is bullying?**

We define bullying as:

***Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally***

The recognised categories are:

**DIRECT PHYSICAL BULLYING:**

Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or hiding / damaging belongings

**DIRECT VERBAL BULLYING:**

Name calling, teasing, insulting or threatening

**INDIRECT EMOTIONAL BULLYING:**

Looks, social exclusion, rumours, gossip

Cyberbullying is a more recent problem that has developed alongside the increased use of mobile phones and social media. It is usually an extension of verbal and emotional bullying, with technology providing another route to harass the target. It must be noted that it is rarely used in isolation from other forms of bullying identified. However it differs from other forms of bullying due to the invasion of home and personal space, the difficulty in controlling the circulated content, the size of the audience and the perceived anonymity.

**Cyberbullying can be defined as:**

***The use of information and communication technology, particularly mobile phones and social media, to deliberately and repeatedly to upset someone***

**Key Principles**

The Anti Bullying Service follows 5 key principles when developing strategies, policy and practice.

1. **LISTEN** and understand the views of Lincolnshire's children and young people on bullying and how it impacts on their lives
2. **CHALLENGE** attitudes and behaviours so that bullying prevention is integral to children and young people's rights
3. **DEVELOP** a consistent approach to understanding and tackling bullying
4. **RAISE SELF-ESTEEM**, confidence and develop emotional resilience for children and young people
5. **SUPPORT** schools to respond effectively to bullying behaviours and develop effective prevention strategies

## How have the key principles informed planning of services?

1. **LISTEN** and understand the views of Lincolnshire's children and young people on bullying and how it impacts on their lives

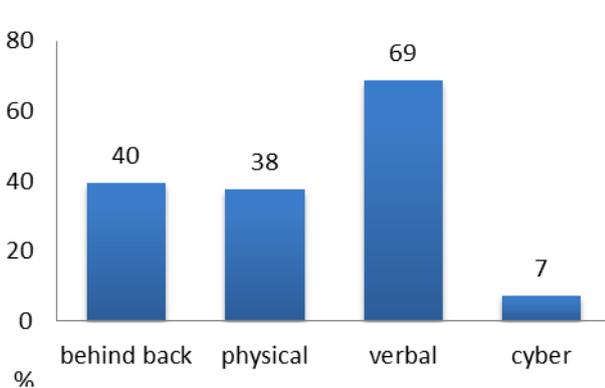
The duty of the local authority to collect Anti Bullying data from schools ceased following the election of the coalition government. This left the authority with little opportunity to hear the views of children and young people regarding incidences of bullying. To remedy this, the annual online Anti Bullying Census was developed and rolled out to schools in 2011 and has captured the views and experiences of children and young people every year since, during national Anti Bullying Week every November. The census is offered to schools as a free service and all participating schools receive a full colour report along with a spread sheet of their data and anonymised aggregate data from the rest of the county for comparison.

The census is designed to help us gain a snapshot of children and young people's views around bullying, helping us all to understand and therefore respond to their experiences and concerns. This allows us to identify key areas for development and ensure work is targeted to where it is needed most.

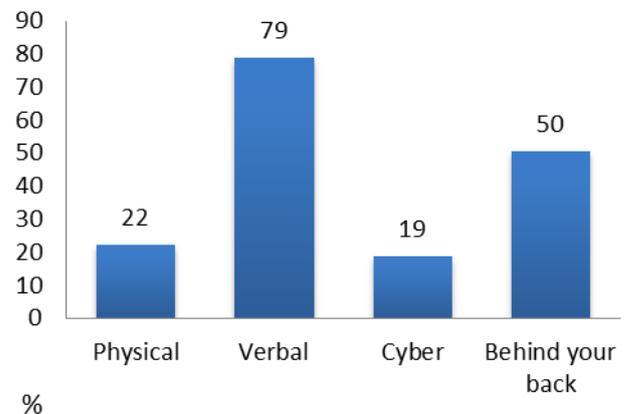
This year's results are consistent with previous year's findings in terms of types of bullying experienced and the location of where incidents took place.

Verbal bullying has consistently been the most common form of bullying behaviour, it is felt that this is principally due to the ease in which it can be said and how hard it can be to deal with. We work hard to ensure it is understood that verbal bullying impacts on children and young people in just the same way as other types of bullying. We also note that Cyberbullying has consistently been the least common form of bullying, particularly in Primary schools. While cyberbullying incidents are less common, when they do occur they generally involve a wider audience and therefore a higher perceived impact on the target of the bullying.

### What kind of bullying was it?



Primary 2014

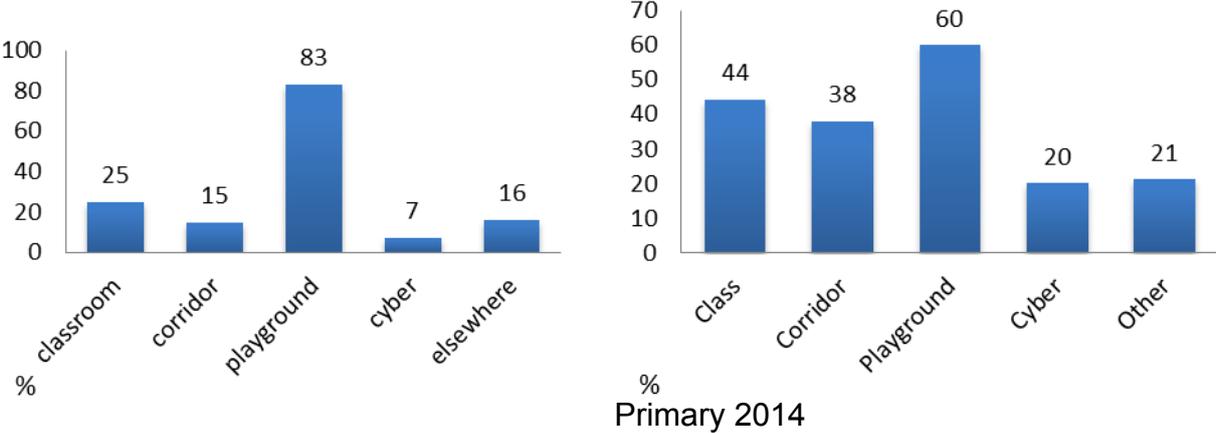


Secondary 2014

The majority of bullying incidents in Primary schools take place in the playground. This is not surprising as their learning time is generally spent with the same

member of staff in the same room, which allows easier supervision. In secondary schools whilst bullying in the playground is still the most common, it is noticeably also more widespread across other areas of the school. There is more movement around classrooms in secondary settings which increases opportunity for bullying behaviour to occur.

Where did the bullying happen?



Secondary 2014

The Census supports all participating schools in developing their own targeted support mechanisms, especially in light of Ofsted inspection arrangements, where safety, including bullying, has a greater profile. As the census takes place annually, participating schools are able to compare year on year data.

The multi-agency Anti Bullying Working Group meet bi monthly and regularly discuss the census information along with other areas of data collection of bullying incidents. The School Liaison Officer reports all parental complaints which are related to bullying to the Anti Bullying Officer, who monitors these, looking to identify any trends or patterns. School exclusions due to bullying behaviour are also monitored. Data is shared and discussed within the Anti Bullying Working Group to help inform planning for all partners.

The Lincolnshire Participation Action Group (LPAG) identified bullying as its key concern last year. The Anti Bullying Officer helped coordinate a range of activities with the group of young people to gain their views and experiences. This culminated in a planning day where the young people of LPAG attended a workshop and helped identify possible work streams. This information was then fed into action planning for future Anti Bullying work. The LPAG group also created 2 videos which we have shared via teeninfoincs and social media.

2. **CHALLENGE** attitudes and behaviours so that bullying prevention is integral to children and young people's rights

Children and young people are bullied for a wide range of reasons, and we support schools tackle all forms of bullying. The summary below shows census results for secondary age pupils to the question 'What was the reason for the bullying'.

Reason for being bullied	2011	2012	2013	2014
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Ability	-	12%	16%	15%
Appearance	48%	44%	44%	44%
Disability or SEND	7%	6%	7%	9%
Gender	5%	4%	3%	5%
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	4%	6%	5%	6%
Race / Ethnic origin	1%	8%	5%	6%
Religion / Belief	3%	6%	3%	3%
Sexual Orientation	10%	9%	14%	11%

Minority groups within school communities on many occasions can and do experience greater frequency and severity of bullying. As part of the wider Anti Bullying work carried out, aspects of equality and diversity, celebration of difference and respect for others are covered, this is designed to challenge attitudes and discrimination of minority groups and helps to educate and inform pupils breaking down stereotypes and prejudice.

The Ofsted school inspection handbook 2014 – Behaviour and safety of pupils outlines anti bullying inspection criteria as follows:

*Types, rates and patterns of bullying and the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment; this includes cyberbullying and prejudiced based bullying related to special educational need, sex, race, religion and belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.*

*The effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes language that is derogatory about disabled people, and homophobic and racist language.*

All schools have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to support all pupils equally regardless of any of the protected characteristics.

3. **DEVELOP** a consistent approach to understanding and tackling bullying

The Anti Bullying Officer attends the East Midlands Anti Bullying Working Group and the Stonewall East Midlands Working Group, where Anti Bullying leads from across the region share information, best practice and ideas. This has allowed collaboration between authorities, which shared projects deliver reduced planning time and resources costs. For example Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire have recently collaborated, developed and rolled out a theatre in education project to schools across both authorities.

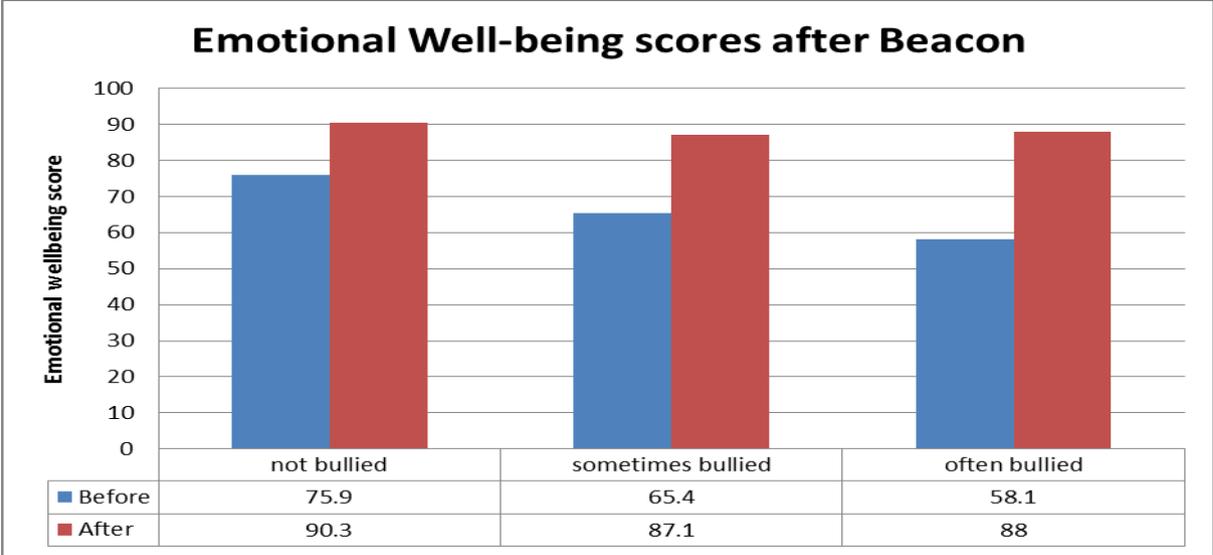
4. **RAISE SELF-ESTEEM**, confidence and develop emotional resilience for children and young people

The Beacon project provides targeted support and intervention to improve the emotional wellbeing of children. There are two strands within the scheme; Beacon Transition and Primary Beacon. Beacon Transition is designed to support children around the time of transition to secondary school and can run in primary and

secondary schools. Primary Beacon is a scheme aimed at identifying children who may be quiet, shy, anxious, isolated, withdrawn or finding it difficult to make friends. The scheme then provides intervention to prevent these children facing disadvantages and to increase active participation in their academic and social environment. The scheme runs as a ninety minute after school club once a week for ten weeks.

In Beacon Primary children in Year 3 are usually targeted. Quiet, shy children are often invited as well as children who feel less confident in large groups. When Beacon is running to support transition, all children in Year six complete a questionnaire to assess their general wellbeing and their attitude towards starting secondary school. Groups of children identified by research to be at risk at transition, and children who have reported anxiety around transition are invited to attend a Beacon transition club.

As part of the Beacon impact evaluation the question, “Do you get picked on?” with the available responses being; “Yes, No, Sometimes”. This enabled schools to include children who have experienced bullying (the terms “picked on” were used as it was felt children would view this term as less threatening and thus would be more likely to disclose. In the eyes of society and the researcher, being picked on is no different to being bullied). When running analysis on the data it was observed that children who had responded “Yes” and “Sometimes” appeared to have the lowest wellbeing scores. After statistically analysing the results it was discovered that there was a statistically significant difference between the emotional wellbeing scores of those who have been picked on and those who have not. A key finding in this investigation was that the difference in emotional wellbeing between the three groups of, "picked on", "sometimes picked on", and “not picked on”, was no longer statistically significant after participation in a Beacon Transition scheme. When the results were looked at in more detail it was seen that after participating in a Beacon Scheme, less children responded that they were being picked on than pre intervention. This suggests that attending Beacon enabled children to feel more able to stop any bullying which was taking place as well as increase their wellbeing.



5. **SUPPORT** schools to respond effectively to bullying behaviours and develop effective prevention strategies

The need to support schools meet their statutory duties and help prepare them for the requirements of Ofsted provides a key area for delivery of Anti Bullying Services. Schools regularly request support and guidance, and recent requests have been particularly focused on supporting Anti Bullying policy and school development plans, how to tackle homophobia and homophobic language and requests for delivery of general Anti Bullying staff training.

**How have we delivered Anti Bullying Services?**

A range of strategies are implemented within the authority to support effective policy and practice to ensure schools meet their statutory obligations in relation to Anti Bullying. This is provided via development of model documentation, staff training and support of senior leadership teams in developing robust strategies which influence practice across the school.

A wide range of activities and resources have also been created to support schools develop effective prevention strategies. Resources include lesson plans, assembly plans, ideas for covering Anti Bullying and equality issues within core subject areas, provision of assemblies, workshops, presentations and multimedia resources, as well as working with school councils and delivery of staff training.

To strengthen the stop bullying message a range of promotional materials have been developed and disseminated into all Lincolnshire Schools. Separate posters have been developed for Primary and Secondary pupils with clear themes giving a differentiated message. These have also been sent to GP's surgeries, Libraries and Children's Centres across the County.



A leaflet for parents has been developed to give help, advice and guidance along with useful links and contacts. Leaflets have recently been developed for pupils, which have followed the themes for the posters, one for Primary and one for Secondary, to give an integrated message and vision.

Anti Bullying week is a time when schools are particularly focussed on Anti Bullying initiatives and highlighting issues around the subject. This is a very busy time for the Anti Bullying Officer, with many schools requesting assemblies, workshops and

presentations. Each Anti Bullying Week has a theme, with this year's theme being a focus on bullying due to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Previous themes have included the role of the bystander and verbal bullying.

The Department for Education (DfE) also supported this year's Anti Bullying Week theme by offering free training via the Anti Bullying Alliance. Our Anti Bullying service coordinated the delivery of two training sessions within Lincolnshire, in Grantham and Lincoln, with nearly 40 teaching staff attending the sessions. This training was very well received and very detailed, with a great deal of information shared. Planning is in progress to utilise the training provided in the sessions and develop a 'workbook' which can be rolled out across all schools.

Early years practitioners from across the County attended an event at Myle Cross during June to celebrate the pilot Diversity Project.

The project was a development through partnership between the Anti Bullying and Birth to Five Services to support and inspire early years settings to be innovative in their approaches to tackling issues around equality and diversity and respect for others. The initial idea of this project was formed following key work carried out in Lincolnshire schools to challenge homophobia and homophobic language with LGBT Charity Stonewall and the Anti Bullying Service.



Pilot settings were given training during launch meetings and provided with a wide range of resources, which included Stonewall literature and the 'Out for our children' resource including a range of books, persona dolls, puppets, musical instruments and much more.

The event was an opportunity for settings involved in the project to display and share examples of their innovation with a wide range of very inspiring practice on show. Other settings attending the event were able to learn from this good practice and continue into the future with a greater awareness and confidence of dealing with issues around diversity.

In October as part of our work with the LGBT Charity Stonewall to tackle homophobia and homophobic language in schools, we were given the opportunity

to host a visit from Sir Ian McKellan into two secondary schools in the County. The Schools were The Priory Academy LSST and William Farr C of E School and they were both delighted by the experience. As Sir Ian asked for a press embargo prior to the events, both schools were required to keep it a secret from staff and pupils until the day of the event. This meant that schools were not inundated by the press and pupils could focus on the messages Sir Ian shared.

He spoke to children studying Key Stage 4 and A Level students, about his roles in films and campaigning against section 28 of the Local Government Act. This law was repealed in 2003.

He told students his biggest regret was not telling his parents about his sexuality. He came out to his stepmother hours before a BBC interview discussing sexuality, but she said she had known for 35 years.

He said: *“To be gay, is to be different, is to be honest. What’s natural is to be different, not the same, it is not the nature of life to be the same.”*

He advised students thinking of coming out to talk to people they trust first, and to not necessarily tell both friends and family at the same time.



Headteacher of William Farr, Andy Stones, said: *“It was a fantastic surprise for both the staff and the students. Sir Ian spoke very eloquently and his stories really had an impact on the students. It will be a day to remember for many of us.”*

**What impact have we had?**

The annual Anti Bullying Census data shows that since we began collecting information in 2011 the greatest impact has been in Primary schools with pupils who say they have been bullied steadily dropping from 31% in 2011 to 25% in 2014. Secondary pupils' responses have remained reasonably static over the same period at approx. 26%.

This also seems to be the situation for pupils' perception of how well schools deal with bullying, with a 10% increase to 53% of Primary pupils rating their school as *dealing with bullying very well* and Secondary pupils giving the same response only 25% of the time with little change since 2011. The question *does your school help pupils who are worried / sad about bullying* shows Primary pupils response of *yes all the time* up from 56% to 64% whilst Secondary pupils response has dropped from 38% to 32% over the same period. It is felt anecdotally that Primary schools embed pastoral values more efficiently whilst secondary school perhaps need to revisit the topics more regularly before they are embedded fully and the data seems to corroborate this.

As part of the process of visiting schools and delivering assemblies, workshops and presentations feedback is regularly sought. This ensures that what is delivered meets the needs of schools as much as possible.

Here are some examples of the feedback received...

*"Thank you for coming to school last week and working with our students. My only regret is that I didn't know about you for the previous students and they missed out. Keep up the good work."*

*"Many thanks for coming to school yesterday and taking our assembly. I know it was of value to the students and several staff came to me later in the day and said how good your presentation was. I'm so glad you gave the students information about where to access help but so sad to see how many there yesterday appear to have first-hand experience of cyber bullying."*

*"In the last 48 hours I and other staff have heard and chatted to kids about homophobia, sexuality and the use of the word gay more than I have ever experienced in my 16 year career.....I wanted to say thank you"*

As part of our commitment to ensuring all pupils are treated equally in schools and to help identify good practice and develop peer review the Anti Bullying Service take part in the LGBT Charity Stonewall's Education Equality Index. In 2014 Lincolnshire County Council ranked joint 8<sup>th</sup> in the country, a rise of two places since 2013, which compares practice and policy of participating local authorities.

Lincolnshire came joint 8<sup>th</sup> with Norfolk County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council came top overall. In the East Midlands region, Lincolnshire came top, seconded by Leicestershire County Council. Meanwhile, Nottinghamshire County Council earned the most improved local authority title.

We are very proud to be recognised by Stonewall as one of the top 10 local authorities in the country in tackling homophobic bullying and homophobic language in schools. To have improved our position from 10 last year to eight this

year highlights the passion, commitment and enthusiasm by everyone involved across schools, colleges and children's services in creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all.

Luke Tryl, Stonewall Head of Education said: *"Lincolnshire County Council deserves enormous congratulations on their performance in this year's Stonewall Education Equality Index. Homophobic bullying still has a detrimental impact on the attendance, achievement and life chances of young people. It's fantastic to see the work of our Top 10 highlighted in the Index, inspiring others to take action to provide teachers with the tools they need to make schools a safe and supportive place to help all young people to achieve their full potential."*

Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for Education added: *"Stonewall's research clearly shows that all too often the biggest barrier to tackling homophobic bullying isn't lack of will, but lack of teacher confidence. This year's Education Equality Index shows that evermore local authorities are now rising to meet this challenge by providing the training and support that teachers need to challenge homophobia in their classrooms."*

It is becoming apparent that more children and young people are now identifying as transgender in the county. Many schools are dealing with this very complicated issue for the first time and are lacking experience and knowledge. This is a tricky situation for schools with little information out there and many issues arising, particularly around bullying, for pupils who transition during their school lives. We have had 3 schools in the Lincoln area contact the Anti Bullying Service in the last 2 months seeking help, advice and guidance about this issue. Recent feedback received shows the anxiety many schools feel in dealing with this area....

*"I was feeling quite overwhelmed when I spoke to you last night so I am really delighted to have made contact and had such positive responses."*

## **2. Conclusion**

### **What are our future plans?**

The development of an Anti Bullying award or Quality Mark is a key piece of development work for the coming months. This will be developed in collaboration with schools and the wider children's workforce across the County, with a pilot project of a small selection of Primary and Secondary schools to be selected to trial the project. This will encourage schools to further engage with the Anti Bullying Service and should reduce instances of bullying by helping schools identify strengths and areas for development and improve pupils understanding and perception of what their schools are doing to tackle bullying behaviour.

As has been identified through the information generated by the Anti Bullying Census, there needs to be a greater focus on embedding Anti Bullying practice and procedures in Secondary schools. This will become part of the focus for discussions and planning a long term strategy for Secondary provision.

The Anti Bullying Officer and Ethnic Minority & Traveller Education Team (EMTET) are investigating more efficient ways to deliver training and support around equality

and diversity issues into schools. It is planned that a training package will be developed where schools would be able to request full training of all aspects or select key areas they wish to develop.

We know there are clear links between being a target of bullying behaviour and the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Poor emotional health and wellbeing has, in many cases, a longer term detrimental effect on children and young people's lives and can cause young people to engage in dangerous behaviours including self-harm. We plan to investigate and research this key area over the coming year with a view to developing a multi-agency approach to tackling this growing problem.

The Anti Bullying census has identified that Looked After Children (LAC) are approx. twice as likely as their peers to be the target of bullying behaviour. This requires further investigation. The Anti Bullying Officer will meet with the V4C - The Children in Care Council to gain a greater understanding of the issues these children and young people experience with the ultimate plan to identify possible areas of development to help schools and the wider children's workforce reduce this situation and help support children in care.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Anti Bullying Work Plan 2014 - 2015

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Sophie Whitehead, who can be contacted on 01522 555529 or [sophie.whitehead@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.whitehead@lincolnshire.gov.uk).